

23. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in claim 21 wherein said muffling means comprises a honeycomb structure.

Remarks/Arguments

Applicants have amended Claim 1 to overcome the Examiner's objection by limiting said claim to a muffling means that has a wall or walls in-line with the initial direction of gas flow into the negative pressure reservoir. No where in Boutelle, US Patent 5,380,267, does it disclose any relationship between the walls of the pressure reservoir or the initial direction of gas flow. In fact the direction of gas flow, due to the nature of the Boutelle invention, is not important. Therefore, how can one say that a limitation as to the initial gas flow is anticipated by Boutelle? Since claims 2 – 5 and 7 are dependent upon claim 1, the same argument pertains to those claims. Applicants have also amended claim 7 to provide for the structure of the muffling means to be a honeycomb structure to distinguish claim 7 from claim 1. As to claim 13, Applicants have also amended said claim to provide a honeycomb structure which is not anticipated by Boutelle.

While the above argument also applies to the Examiner's rejection of claim claims 6, 8 – 12, under 35 U.S.C. 103 (b), but not to claim 14. However, since claim 14 is dependent on claim 13, which has been amended so as not to be anticipated nor unpatentable over Boutelle, claim 14 should be allowable.

Applicants, in view of the above respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the presently pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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